Supreme Court Bench in South India

*52. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh observed a protest day on 25th January, 2002, demanding establishment of a Supreme Court Bench in South India; and

(b) if so, Government's response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) According to the information received from the Bar Council of the State of Andhra Pradesh, Advocates in the State observed "Protest Day" without disruption of Court work. In view of the provisions of article 130 of the Constitution of India, no action can be taken by the Government.

Bhopal gas tragedy after-effects

*53. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state;

(a) whether in 17 years since the Bhopal Gas Tragedy happened it has now been revealed by a Fact-Finding Mission that toxic chemicals from the Union Carbide Factory have spread not only into soil, water and vegetables but even inside breast milk;

(b) whether it is a fact that these toxins are now being passed on from mothers to their children and have shown a dangerous pattern of mental health illness specific to Bhopal survivors; and

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to check any such incident in future?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (c) Government of India is aware that a Non-Governmental Fact-Finding Mission has very recently gone into the possibility of toxic chemicals from the Union Carbide factory spreading into the soil, water and vegetables. However, no comments can be offered on the report until the same is considered by the technical agencies within the Government.

However, the Government of Madhya Pradesh have intimated that they are not aware of any such study conducted in this regard. There are some hazardous chemicals still lying in the factory and the Government of Madhya Pradesh is taking steps to safely dispose of the same in consultation with the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO).

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) had conducted a study in 1985 on the genetic risks evaluation of pregnancy outcome in pregnant women exposed to toxic gas and to monitor the teratogenic potential of the toxic gas on the outcome and development of new borns delivered by the exposed mothers. Information obtained on 2566 women who were pregnant at the time of exposure and who were followed up, revealed that while abortion rates were higher than the national average, perinatal mortality rates were within the limit. There was also no increase in the occurrence of congenital malformation. Another study conducted by the ICMR was on the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in the area, and it reveals that the prevalence rate was higher in the exposed areas as compared to the controlled areas which showed decreasing trend with time.

FDI in housing sector

*54. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering 100 per cent FDI in housing sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the proposal of Government to save the Indian construction companies in the housing sector?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Government, by a notification dated 21-5-2001 issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has permitted foreign direct investment (FDI) upto 100% for development of integrated townships only, including housing commercial premises, hotels, resorts, city and regional level urban infrastructure facilities such as roads and bridges, mass rapid transit systems and manufacture of building materials. Development of land and providing allied infrastructure will form an integral part of township's development, for which necessary guidelines/norms